



FILE: PA01-0098

DATE: February 14, 2001

TO: File/Record/Applicant

FROM: Thomas B. Mathews, Director, Planning and Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Planning Application PA01-0098 for Site Development Permit for a communication facility.

LOCATION: 11905 Lambert Road in the unincorporated portion of Irvine.

APPLICANT: Nextel Communications, applicant
Barbara Lambert, owner

I. NATURE OF PROJECT:

The project site and surrounding properties are zoned A1 "General Agricultural". Communication facilities are a permitted use within the "General Agricultural" District subject to a Site Development Permit. Currently a communication facility on a 22' X 27' piece of land, operated by Sprint PCS exists on the property (PA97-0084). The existing facility includes eight antennas measuring approximately 16'6" in height. The site also includes a row of seven equipment boxes, which each measure approximately 4' X 2' with a height of 5'.

Nextel Communications is proposing a communication facility similar to the existing Sprint PCS site. The objective of the proposed project is to provide coverage along the 241 Toll Road, Portola Parkway and to areas of north Irvine. The hilltop location will allow coverage without a large ground mounted structure. Instead smaller antennas called "Popsicle Stick" antennas are proposed. The Nextel proposal includes the installation of the following equipment:

1. Three sets (or sectors) of panel antennas will be arranged in rows. Antennas will measure 6' high by 1' wide and will be mounted on 14' high galvanized steel poles. The maximum height of the antennas will be 14'. Each sector will consist of 5 "Popsicle Stick" antennas for a total of fifteen antennas proposed. Sector "A" will face southeast and will measure 11' long. Sector "B" will face southwest and Sector "C" will face northwest. Both will measure 12' in length and will be located on the Westside of the building.
2. One prefabricated equipment enclosure will be located on the site. Electrical and ancillary radio equipment will be located inside the structure along with air conditioning units to maintain inside temperature. The structure will be 11'6" X 20' and will have a height of 10'6". The lease area will measure 33' X 30'10". The structure will be located 5'8" from the south lease line, 8'6" from the east lease line, 5'2" from the north lease line, and 13' from the west lease line.

3. A 6' high chain link fence with redwood slats will surround the lease area and provide screening for the site.

The small hill that the project is located on is located north of the old El Toro Marine Air Base. El Toro Air Base is proposed to become an international airport if approved by the Board of Supervisors. Section 7-9-129.4 "Hazards to Air Navigation" stipulates that any construction within the proximity of an airport must file with the FAA in order to determine any potential impacts the project may have with air navigation in the area. For this reason the Airport Land Use Commission For Orange County has asked that the applicant file Form 7460-1 with the FAA Regional Office.

The proposed Nextel site will be located approximately 4' due west of the existing Sprint PCS site. The Nextel lease area will measure approximately 1,020 square feet. The site is located north of Portola Parkway and west of Old Bee Canyon Road. Access to the project site is gained from by a private paved road that starts at the terminus of Lambert Road and winds up the small hill. The paved road was approved in 1998 under PA980079. The road was constructed in order to gain access to the existing Sprint site.

The proposed project site and vicinity are designated open-space. The surrounding hillside is presently vacant and covered with indigenous vegetation. A citrus grove is located to the south and east. The soil conditions at the immediate site are generally hard, dry, dirt and clay. No significant resources exist on the immediate project site, thereby having no impact on biological resources. There are no locally designated species, designated natural communities or migration corridors that would be impacted by the project. However, Coastal Sage Scrub does exist in some areas adjacent to the proposed project site and therefore a Condition of Approval is included in attachment B to address this issue.

Nextel has agreed to provide a comprehensive landscaping plan for the top of the hill. The original planning application for Cox (now Sprint PCS), PA97-0084, required landscaping with native, drought tolerant, low maintenance plants. Even after Sprint took responsibility for the site no landscaping has been provided for the site to provide screening from the surrounding areas. The condition was never satisfied and Nextel has agreed to satisfy this requirement. The plan involves planting several California Pepper trees along with a large number of shrubs. This landscape plan will provide screening and will buffer the view from Portola Parkway and the surrounding area.

In summary, this application complies with the development regulations of the A1 "General Agricultural" District. The project will also co-locate with an existing carrier and therefore utilize already existing infrastructure such as utilities and access roads. The design will allow the facility to be screened by the native type landscape. Therefore, subject to the findings and conditions attached, this Site Development Permit is approved.

II. REFERENCE: (Authority for Administrative action is given by what ordinance, regulation, etc.)

Orange County Zoning Code Section 7-9-55 A1 "General Agricultural", Section 7-9-129.4 "Hazards to Air Navigation", and Section 7-9-150 "Discretionary Permits and Procedures".

III. ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION:

Negative Declaration No. PA010098 has been prepared and was posted for public review on 10/31/01. It is attached for your consideration and must be approved prior to project approval with a finding that it is adequate to satisfy the requirements of CEQA. Appendix A contains the required CEQA Finding.

IV. CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the subject proposal has been Conditionally Approved as noted below.

Thomas B. Mathews, Director
Planning and Development Services Department

By: _____

Chad Brown, Section Chief
CPSD/Site Planning Section

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A - Findings

Appendix B - Conditions of Approval

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Director on this permit to the Orange County Planning Commission within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of required documents and a filing fee of \$760.00 filed at the Development Processing Center, 300 N. Flower St., Santa Ana.